



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ



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U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Dave Ahlschwede

Newly selected Prime Minister Jawad al-Maliki (left) sits with fellow representatives as votes are counted to name Iraq's parliamentary speaker.

Taking Shape

Iraq's Council of Representatives nominates new prime minister

BAGHDAD — More than four months after the December 2005 Parliamentary Elections, the Iraqi Council of Representatives came together in Baghdad Saturday and nominated the country's new prime minister, speaker and other key officials.

Jawad al-Maliki, a Shiite hardliner, was selected new prime minister and promised Saturday to swiftly finish building a unity government after parliament elected top national leadership, ending months of political deadlock. He was also a tough negotiator in drawn-out deliberations over the new constitution which passed last year.

Maliki has 30 days to assemble a Cabinet from divided Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish parties, filling key ministries that control Iraq's burgeoning security forces.

U.S. President George W. Bush hailed Maliki's nomination Saturday, saying the move toward establishing a new government in Baghdad "will make America more secure."

"The agreement reflects the will of the Iraqi people who defied the terrorists by voting to choose the men and women who will lead their nation forward," Bush said. "This historic achievement by determined

See *Maliki*, Page 5

GENERAL CASEY'S CORNER**Lending a helping hand**

Last week, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense marked the founding of the Iraqi Air Force.

Seventy-five years ago, on April 22, 1931 at a small airport in the Washash neighborhood of Baghdad, five pilots and 32 aircraft mechanics officially became the Iraqi Air Force.

Today's Iraqi Air Force is an efficient and growing member

of Iraq's Joint Security Forces, making important contributions to the safety and liberty of the Iraqi people.

The five operational squadrons of the Iraqi Air Force provide key reconnaissance and transportation support to Iraq's civil and military security forces. One transport squadron, two reconnaissance squadrons and two utility squadrons conduct support operations to detect and interdict illegal activity throughout Iraq. Iraqi Air Force surveillance operations help protect critical infrastructure and prevent foreign terrorist infiltration.

Equally important, the Iraqi Air Force provides transportation and sustainment to ground forces defend-

By Gen. George W. Casey
Multi-National Force - Iraq
Commanding General



ing against terrorist and insurgent threats. These capabilities will continue to grow.

With the formation of a third utility squadron equipped with 10 recently purchased Mi-17 helicopters and other programmed improvements, the Iraqi Air Force has become an integral part of the frontline defense and a strategic partner in Iraq's stable and secure future.

The commemoration allowed the men and women of the Iraqi Air Force to pause and reflect on proud traditions of serving their fellow citizens and their work toward a peaceful future. They are a small, but important part of the more than 250,000 Iraqis serving in the Security Forces. All these brave Iraqis have chosen the ideals of selfless service, national unity and integrity to guide the path toward peace, prosperity, and security.

On behalf of the Coalition, I congratulate the Iraqi Air Force and all members of the Iraqi Security Forces for their dedication and sacrifice to preserve liberty in Iraq.



An Iraqi C-130 sits on the tarmac at Muthana Air Base, part of the growing Iraqi Air Force.

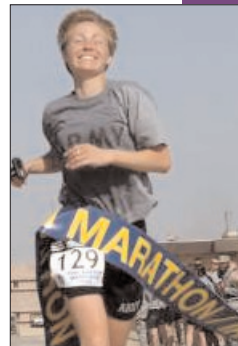
U.S. Army photo by Spc. Rick Rzepka

Photos around the Fertile Crescent

Marine Capt. Michael Chankij looks for insurgents during a security patrol through the Kandari Market near FOB Abu Ghraib April 15.



Spc. Clay Yoder, from the 172nd Infantry Brigade, changes a transmission on a cargo truck at FOB Marez in Mosul.



Army Capt. Carrie Peterson crosses the finish line during the 26.2 mile-long race held at Ali Base, modeled after the Boston Marathon.



Marine Cpl. John W. Harland assembles a meal of steamed white rice and General Tso's Chicken from the field kitchen at the Camp Korean Village.

THIS WEEK IN
IRAQ Online

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The calm in northern Iraq

A 101st Airborne Division commander credits Iraqi Army and Police

Story by Sgt. Sara Wood
American Forces Press Service

The relative calm that has been seen in Iraq's northern provinces can be attributed to aggressive Coalition and Iraqi leaders who understand the area and know how to diffuse problems before they happen, a U.S. commander in the area said.

"The presence of Coalition Forces, along with an increasingly competent and confident Iraqi Army brigade and Iraqi Police force inside **Kirkuk**, are keeping a lid on potential violence," said Army Col. David R. Gray, commander of the 101st

Airborne Division's 1st Brigade.

Kirkuk is an ethnically diverse city that has nationally significant natural resources and infrastructure, Gray said. Roughly 40 percent of Iraq's oil and 70 percent of its natural gas come from Kirkuk, and there is tension among ethnic groups about control of the region. That tension is intensified by the return of Kurds who were displaced during Saddam Hussein's regime.

The ethnic tensions occasionally manifest themselves in acts of intimidation, coercion of government leaders, assassinations and kidnappings,

Gray said, but Coalition and Iraqi forces in the area have been successful in deter-

ring most of the violence.

"I would credit the relative calm that most believe is in our area to aggressive commanders and Soldiers on the ground - both Iraqi and American - who keep their finger on the pulse in the region and have developed a keen sense for the potential flashpoints."

Political stability is a great concern for the Iraqi leaders and Security Forces in Kirkuk, Gray said. Having a national unity government seated will resolve many issues that will help the provincial and local governments work, he said.

Iraqi forces in the north have made great strides in capability and confidence, Gray said. In two provinces, Iraqi forces have assumed control of security. In Kirkuk, an Iraqi Army brigade will assume responsibility for the area outside the city at the end of this month and will begin conducting independent operations.



Col. David Gray, commander the 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade, meets with Sheik Anwar Al-Assi.

This Wiki in Iraq

Kirkuk stands on the site of the ancient Gutian capital of Arrapha near the Khasa River on the ruins of a 5,000-year-old settlement. The population was estimated at 755,700 in 2003.

New system means no accountant needed

Story by Spc. James P. Hunter
Multi-National Corps - Iraq

Accountability plays a major role in the success of military operations. Accounting for all personnel and equipment ensures readiness, especially on the battlefield.

Many Soldiers within the Iraqi Army were unaccounted for, said Lt. Col. Lester Moore, an advisor for Iraqi Ground Forces Command. They did not have a system set to keep accurate accountability of their forces.

"If a unit reports they have 100 percent accountability and really only have 70 percent, there is a readiness issue," he said. "Accountability is important to what is going on in this country. Accountability is something disciplined, fighting professionals have. It allows armed forces to

take care of their Soldiers."

In 2005, a Unit Transition Point was developed to solve the personnel, equipment accountability and payroll problems within the Iraqi Army. In November 2005, the concept was approved, and different phases were implemented to diffuse UTP throughout the Iraqi Army.

Essentially, the UTP is a kit made up of a laptop, electronics to collect voice prints, photos, retinal scans and finger prints. On March 18, the UTP was fielded to a test battalion. The 2nd Iraqi Army Division's 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, received two UTP jump kits, five additional laptops, printers and a cop-

er to help account for their personnel and equipment.

"The Iraqis had little, if any accountability of their personnel, equipment and pay," said Lt. Col. William Stoppel, a partnership strategic planner for Multi-National

Corps - Iraq. "This was created to get a baseline for the Iraqis, so when their people went on leave they had good accountability of who is within

their unit."

Iraqi Soldiers are still in the testing phase of the UTP system, he said. They are progressing and he hopes the UTP can spread Army-wide to help gain accountability of their Armed Forces.

"The Iraqis had little, if any accountability of their personnel, equipment and pay."



Police recruits at the Sulaimaniyah Training Center demonstrate tactics learned at the academy during their graduation ceremony.

Police recruits now grads

Story and photos by Spc. William Jones
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SULAIMANIYAH — Sixty-three Iraqi recruits graduated from the Sulaimaniyah Training Center and earned the right to be called police officers following a morning ceremony April 13.

The training center, operated jointly by the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and Coalition Forces, teaches the recruits police science, weapons handling, self-defense, drill and ceremony and military courtesy in a ten-week course.

Major Gen. Joseph Peterson, a civilian police assistance training team commander, Gen. Mousaff, the deputy Minister of Interior and other high-ranking officials from the Kurdistan region were present at the graduation ceremony.

Peterson personally congratulated the honor graduates during the graduation ceremony by presenting them with certificates of achievement.

The Sulaimaniyah Training Center is open to all Iraqis who want to become police officers. The graduating class is the third to successfully complete the training this year.



Graduates of the Sulaimaniyah Training Center pass the academy colors to the incoming class.

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Hero of the Week

Iraqi Soldier patrols his hometown

Story by Cpl. Antonio Rosas
1st Marine Division

SAD'AH — One person who calls Sad'ah home, a town near the Iraq-Syria border, grew from a child to become a trained Soldier and now strives to keep his hometown safe from insurgents.

Hadi has an advantage over the other Jundi, Iraqi Army privates who patrol the streets. He has an intimate knowledge of the area of operations. They are neighborhoods where he lived. Just as his fellow Soldiers are proud they've taken the lead on daily security patrols, Hadi is equally proud to keep his neighbors and family safe from improvised explosive devices while sending the message to insurgents that this is his turf.

"I feel good about serving my country

and keeping the area safe from terrorists for my family," said Hadi, a rifleman with the 7th Iraq Army Division's 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade. "The people that know me here get to see me walking the streets."

Before this area was turned over to the Iraqi Army, U.S. Marines made several patrols through the area in Humvees, but never on foot. Now, the 33-year-old Hadi and his platoon walk the streets regularly. The Iraqi Soldiers conduct foot patrols instead of mounted patrols in military vehicles, letting them interact with residents and maintain a steady presence in the area.

Soldiers go house-to-house speaking with the town's residents and, for the most part, are greeted warmly by people of Sad'ah.

"I am glad that I can walk the streets in

peace knowing you are here," said an Iraqi man. "A few months ago it was not possible, especially at night, because there were many bad men on the streets."

After a day of patrolling through the streets and speaking with old neighbors, Hadi said he felt good about the mission. It gave him a chance to shine among the people he grew up with, he said.

"I am happy to be a Soldier and I am losing my nervousness every day," said Hadi, who admits that when he first became a Soldier eight months ago, he was nervous about encountering IEDs. He knew the bombs deadly reputation. Now, walking the streets of his childhood, Hadi is keeping the bombs away and Sad'ah safe for the next generation.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jeff Lowry

The Iraqi Council of Representatives met in Baghdad in March after nation-wide parliamentary elections.

MALIKI

from page 1

Iraqis will make America more secure."

Following his nomination, Maliki vowed to rein in militias by incorporating them into Iraq's security forces, while working with all the country's ethnic groups to tackle the insurgency.

"I intend to form a national unity government that will face the challenges of terrorism and corruption," he said.

President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd who won a second term, named al-Maliki as prime minister-designate, a formality after the dominant Shiite bloc replaced outgoing Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari. Sunnis and Kurds refused to accept al-Jaafari.

The council also selected a parliament speaker, Sunni Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and two deputy speakers, Shiite Khalid al-Attiyah and Kurd Aref Tayfour.

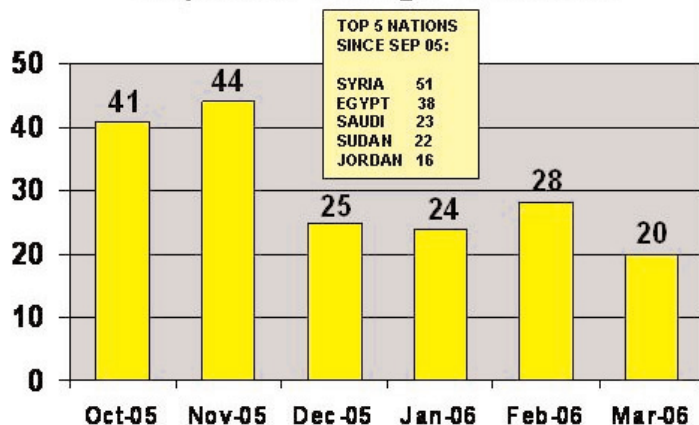
Mashhadani insisted the armed forces must be built "on the basis of national loyalty" and spoke strongly against sectarian violence.

Bush agrees that more work is needed to stabilize the volatile country.

"The new government has the responsibility to deploy the growing strength of the Iraqi Security Forces to defeat the terrorists and insurgents and establish control over the militias," Bush said.

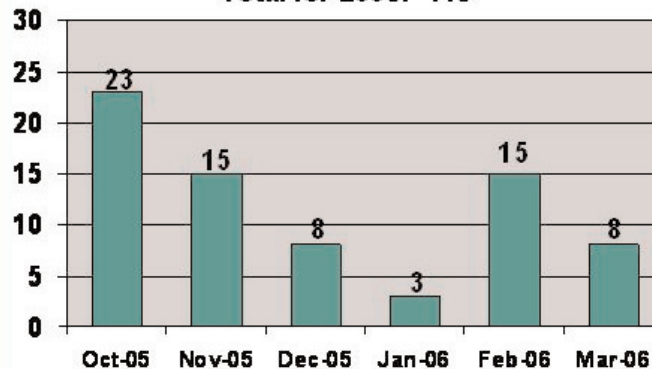
"The new Iraqi government will assume growing responsibility for their nation's security. And as more Iraqi forces stand up, American forces will stand down," he said, adding that there will be "more tough fighting ahead."

Captured Foreign Nationals



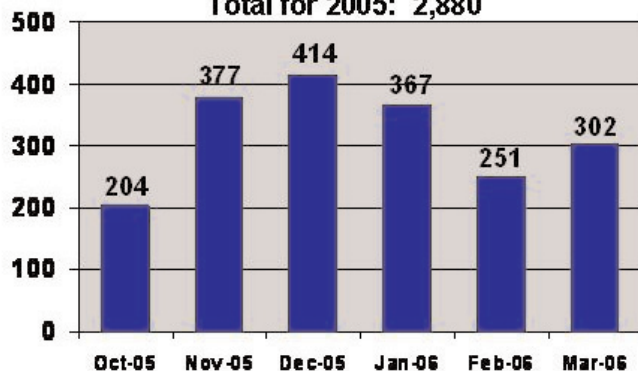
Bomb Makers Killed/Captured

Total for 2005: 115



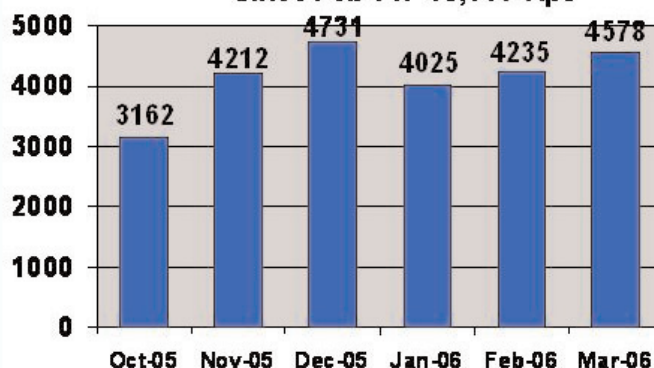
Caches Found

Total for 2005: 2,880



Total Tips

Since Feb 04: 43,111 Tips



MNF-I Weekly Press Conference



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
MNF-I Spokesman

3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army and Iraqi explosive experts IED Disarmed at Alwehda Al Islamiya Mosque

Soldiers from the 6th Iraqi Army Division's 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, and an 6th Iraqi Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team found and disarmed an improvised explosive device in Abu Manasir on April 14.

SUMMARY:

- Acting on a call from the mosque caretakers, Soldiers from 3/6 Iraqi Army responded to a possible IED at the Alwehda Al Islamiya Mosque in the Abu Manasir neighborhood.
- Iraqi EOD was coordinated.
- The 6th Iraqi Army Div. EOD arrived on scene and discovered two 155 mm artillery rounds attached to a timing device and blasting caps.
- The EOD defused the IED and took it with them.

Note: The mosque is currently not used for prayer or services.



Bordering on peace

"We believe that 90 percent of the suicide attacks in Iraq are conducted by foreign fighters. Last year this time, across Iraq, we were averaging about 75 suicide attacks a day. Now we're averaging about 24 a day. One of the reasons for that drawdown is not that Zarqawi and al-Qaida doesn't want to do it anymore, but effective border operations have been capturing foreign nationals at the border.

"Just before the first of the year, we were averaging about 44 captured foreign nationals per month, and now we're down to less than half of that."

Iraq's experts

"In the western portion of Baghdad, mosque caretakers called the Iraqi Army and said, 'Hey, there is a suspected IED in the vicinity of this mosque.' The mosque wasn't an active mosque, but it clearly is a cultural site.

"The Iraqi Army responded - the 3rd Brigade of the 6th Iraqi Army Division. They brought in that division's own explosive ordnance detachment to find the IED and to detonate the IED before it could detonate itself. Found and cleared."



Spc. Gregory Carter checks the framework during the beginning of construction for a playground in Abraham Jaffas April 16. U.S. Soldiers from three different units, Iraqi Soldiers and Iraqi civilians all helped to assemble the playground set.



Spc. Gregory Carter and Sgt. Lucas Murray measure and survey the foundation for a new playground.

Bringing fun to Abraham Jaffas

U.S. Navy photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Larson



Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers level the foundation for a playground set donated by an American company at a school in Abraham Jaffas.

Weary insurgents feeling the pressure

Story by Sgt. Kristopher Joseph
Multi-National Corps-Iraq Public Affairs Office

Uncovered for good

Soldiers on patrol with the 4th Infantry Division's Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, observed suspects digging along a road Thursday. As the patrol approached, the suspects tried to flee in two vehicles, but they were stopped, searched and detained.

In one of the vehicles mortar rounds, fuses and missiles were discovered. At the dig site, Soldiers found a cache with artillery and mortar rounds, anti-personnel land mines, an anti-tank mine and a hand grenade.

More than a feeling

A large cache discovered in the Diyala Province Wednesday by 4th Infantry Soldiers continues to yield munitions.

The 5th Iraqi Army Division's 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade and U.S. Soldiers from the 32nd Cavalry Regiment uncovered more mortar and artillery rounds Thursday.

The initial find of nearly 50 mortar rounds and more than a dozen fuses was found to be much larger when an additional 250 artillery and mortar rounds of were unearthed in the same location.

Minaret madness

Coalition Forces responded to insurgent attacks at several locations in central Ramadi Monday, including the Ramadi Government Center and the Fatemat Mosque.

The attacks, involving multiple homicide car bombs, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine gun and small arms fire appeared to be closely coordinated.

In one incident, Marines from the 8th Marine Regiment were attacked from the Fatemat Mosque in central Ramadi with rocket-propelled grenades. The Marines returned fire but continued to be attacked from the mosque's minaret. The Marines fired a tank round and several machine gun rounds into the minaret, after which fire from the mosque ceased.



U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Brian M. Henner

Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division search for weapons caches along the banks of the Euphrates River near Hit Tuesday.

"This is the fourth time in three-and-a-half weeks that the Ramadi Government Center has received attacks from the Fatemat Mosque," said Lt. Col. Stephen M. Neary, commander of 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment. "I'm extremely proud of my Marines - they only used the proportionate amount of force necessary to repel the insurgent attack."

"Coalition Forces take significant measures to respect all religious sites,"

said Marine spokesperson Lt. Col. Bryan Salas, "but we always maintain the inherent right of self-defense. When insurgents use holy places as safe havens from which to attack Coalition Forces, it is important that we act quickly to defend ourselves and innocent Iraqi civilians."

Of the spear

Responding to a tip from an Iraqi

See OPERATIONS, next page



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. John M. Foster

U.S. Army Sgt. Julius McLarin cuts armor plate with a torch as sparks fly at FOB Marez Tuesday. McLarin is attached to the Brigade Support Battalion, 172nd Infantry Brigade.

Operations

from previous page

citizen, 4th Infantry Division Soldiers found a weapons cache south of Baghdad Monday.

While conducting a combat patrol, Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, received a tip from a resident that led the Soldiers to the cache.

The cache, consisting of eight aerial bombs, was stored in a steel cage and ready to be transported. The Soldiers contacted an explosive ordnance disposal team, which conducted a controlled detonation and destroyed the cache.

Earlier in the day, Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division's 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, discovered a cache while conducting a combat patrol southwest of Baghdad. The cache consisted of rocket-propelled grenade launchers, mortars and an Iraqi police vest.

Good morning

An Iraqi Army patrol was fired upon early Monday morning in Azamiyah, a neighborhood in north Baghdad, start-

ing a protracted seven-hour firefight that raged through to the early afternoon.

A combined checkpoint of Iraqi Police and U.S. Forces was attacked by an estimated 50 gunmen resulting in a call for assistance. A force consisting of five companies of Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Division's 2nd Brigade and two quick reaction force platoons from the 101st Airborne Division's 506th Infantry Regiment responded to the call.

During the course of the fight, five terrorists were killed and seven detained. Reports indicate two Iraqi Army Soldiers were wounded.

Operation over

In the Jabouri Peninsula, Operation Cowpens ended April 14, after nearly a month of discovering caches and hampering insurgent efforts in the area.

The joint operation included the 4th Infantry Division's 8th Brigade Combined Arms Battalion, as well as the 4th Iraqi Army Division's 1st Brigade.

The month-long operation included an air insertion and a ground assault to achieve a foothold on the peninsula. Once attained, the joint force had a

place to base operations and conduct searches of the peninsula to find insurgent supply havens.

The joint assault force killed seven insurgents while sustaining two wounded in action. There were a total of 19 detainees taken during Operation Cowpens.

"We've put a stop to a lot of the (improvised explosive device) making," said Sgt. Daniel Reinhardt, a team leader from 1/8th CAB. "The more we're (on the Jabouri Peninsula), the more stuff we bring out, the less the bad guys are here."

While ridding this region of such a large amount of materials has helped secure the area for Soldiers and Iraqi citizens to live and travel, it's not the only added benefit experienced on the peninsula.

"I think we've made great strides (on the Jabouri Peninsula)," Dailey said. "We're starting to do a lot of programs up there, building some things for them to better the area, doing some medical assessments in the area for them."

"I think the Jabouris are really going to come around and be a part of the community and start to play a great role for the political scene of the Balad area."

Iraqi Soldiers take back forsaken town

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Jason B. Baker
Multi National Corps - Iraq

RAMADI — A small village north of Ramadi had become a safe haven for anti-Iraqi forces, until October of last year.

The enemy hijacked a primary school and a mosque, using them as their operations centers to conduct daily attacks on Coalition and Iraqi Soldiers. Attacks from the area included everything from improvised explosive devices, to small-arms ambushes and indirect-fire attacks with mortars and rockets.

The citizens of this area felt forsaken. That is until an Iraqi Army battalion decided to take back the village. Soldiers from the 7th Iraqi Army Division's 3rd Battalion established a strong point in the area, chipping away at the insurgents.

"Prior to October, there was a lot of insurgent activity in the area," said U.S. Marine 1st Lt. Joe Cuscina, an operations advisor for the 7th Iraqi Army Division. "Two or three weeks after the strong point was set up, (AIF activity) went from a high level to almost non-existent."

Cuscina said Coalition Forces reported 10 to 20 [mortar attacks](#) from the area in September. Since then, there has been only three.

The relationship the Iraqi Soldiers have established with the locals is seen as soon as the Soldiers exit their base, immediately greeted by the children and adults from neighboring homes.

"The people are really supportive of the (Iraqi Security Forces)," said U.S. Marine Staff Sgt. Jashon Richardson, a company advisor with the military transition team. "They see that since the ISF are here, the area has gotten a lot better, so they keep them safe by telling them where caches are, and where IEDs are placed."

During the patrols, the Iraqi Soldiers meet



Iraqi Soldiers from the 7th Iraqi Army Division pull security during a foot patrol through a village north of Ramadi. The Soldiers maintain a constant presence in the area, reducing the amount of enemy activity.

with other residents, check on the status of the infrastructure, the community, roadways and [mosques](#).

"We talk to the Iraqi civilians and check if anyone is sick," said one Iraqi Army Soldier. "We tell them we are here to protect them and help them build their schools and roads," he said.

"As a unit, they are good. They can pretty much go out and operate by themselves now," said Richardson. "Their (noncommissioned officers) have been taking more control than they previously did. Instead of everyone relying on the officer to do everything, the officers can delegate to the NCOs and they make it happen."

The battalion will continue to secure the area until there is a properly trained Iraqi Police force ready to take over the duty. Then, the battalion can take the fight to the enemy in another area of Iraq.

This Wiki in Iraq

A mortar is a smoothbore, muzzle-loading artillery piece that lobs shells at a target. They are relatively simple and easy to operate artillery pieces. Mortars are usually used by infantry units, but have been adopted by the Iraq insurgency because of the system's simplicity.

This Wiki in Iraq

A mosque is a place of worship for followers of the Islamic faith. The word mosque in English is used to represent all types of buildings dedicated for Islamic worship. Muslims all over the world often refer to the mosque by its name in Arabic, masjid.

Multi-National Force Iraq Official Web Site - Microsoft Internet Explorer

WWW.MNF-IRAQ.COM FREEDOM FACT

About 90,000 residents in Abu Ghraib will receive piped drinking water from a project funded by the Commander's Emergency Response Program. A local Iraqi company has the contract for this \$107,000 water distribution network.

Press Desk
For the Troops

Freedom Facts:
The International Monetary Fund estimates Iraq's GDP grew by 2.6% in 2005, and is expected to grow by 10.4% in 2006, adjusted for inflation.

Rebuilding Iraq

Projects that are shaping a nation

Mosul

Renovations are complete to the Ibn al-Mathir Maternity Hospital in Mosul. The center will provide first-rate inpatient and maternity care for the expecting residents, leading to better health and a longer life for mothers and babies.



Arbil

Arbil residents have more reliable electricity thanks to 48 newly-installed transformers.

Tal Afar

More than 2 miles of Tal Afar's roads have been resurfaced, providing easier access to residents.



Baghdad

Workers at the Madinat al-Tib Hospital in the Karkh neighborhood of Baghdad have a new incinerator to properly burn waste and prevent the spread of diseases.

Fallujah

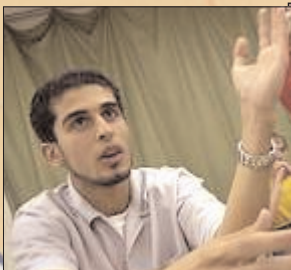
A new water compact unit in Fallujah now provides fresh water to more than 60,000 residents in the southern part of the city.

Baghdad

Repairs to roads around FOB Falcon will help residents in the Rashid neighborhood of Baghdad, giving reliable access to school, work and other activities.

Baghdad

About 200 high school students in Azamiyah neighborhood of Baghdad will benefit from the renovations in their school.





Capt. Cristales, a doctor with the El Salvador Army, distributes chocolate milk to families in Kut. Civil affair teams came to the temporary camp to give out supplies and offer medical services to the people.



El Salvador Lt. Col. Eduardo Carias walks with city leaders as they tour a displaced family camp at a Kut park.



An Iraqi mother waits to see a doctor with her son, who suffers from Hydrocephalus.



A displaced Kut family sits by a tent, serving as temporary housing.

Capt. Cristales, a doctor with the El Salvador Army, examines an Iraqi girl.

Coming to the aid

El Salvador civil affair teams lend support to families displaced by violence

Photos can be found on www.mnf-iraq.com

El Salvador Army photos by Julio Armando Garcia Oliva